

Katherine Teats House
3560 Seventh Avenue
San Diego
San Diego County
California

HABS No. CA-2162

HABS
CAL,
37-SANDI,
26-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

KATHERINE TEATS HOUSE

HABS No. CA-2162

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Location: 3560 Seventh Avenue, San Diego, San Diego County,
California.

Present Owner
and Occupant: Mr. & Mrs. Robert G. Vodicka.

Present Use: Dwelling.

Significance: Designed by internationally known architect Irving John
Gill, who also designed several other houses on Seventh
Avenue, this house was planned as one of a group around a
common garden landscaped by Kate Sessions. Thus it is a
forerunner to the nationally significant Lewis Courts at
Sierra Madre, widely acclaimed at the time of their
construction in 1910.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1906.
2. Architect: Irving John Gill.
3. Original and subsequent owners:

Granted to: Katherine Teats May 7, 1906
From: Lee, Alice

Granted to: Ellen M. Babcock August 27, 1923
From: Katherine Teats

Granted to: Warren, Gerald L. & Euphemia B. March 3, 1969
From: Ellen M. Babcock (Est.)

Granted to: Rodgers, Bernice G. March 3, 1969
From: Warren, Gerald L. & Euphemia B.

Granted to: Kurz, Walter G. & Margy March 3, 1969
From: Rodgers, Bernice G.

Granted to: Vodicka, Robert G. & Phillis J. (Present Owners)
From: Kurz, Walter G. & Margy
4. Builder: Unknown.
5. Original plans: On file at the Art Gallery, University of
Southern California, Santa Barbara. There are six sheets, dated
November 13, 1905.

6. Alterations and additions: In 1912 the upstairs porch was enclosed.

PART II: ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The thin-walled construction method and shared open space exemplify Irving Gill's early interest in and experimentation with problems of designing a moderately priced house. The common design elements and plantings are part of the plan for unification of the whole block.

Little altered since 1912, (alterations also by Gill), the house remains so excellent example of his work.

2. Condition of fabric: Good. Some termite infestation that has been arrested.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Number of stories: The house has two full stories and a partial basement.
2. Layout, shape: The house is basically a rectangle with an enclosed porch addition to the south.
3. Overall dimensions: 40' x 45'.
4. Foundations: The house rests on 6" concrete foundations with 12" footings.
5. Wall construction: The walls of the entire house, exterior as well as interior, are thin wall construction. According to the original drawings these are composed of 1 x 4's set 4" apart (the long dimension running parallel to the plaster surface) with the surfaces finished with plaster on both sides.
6. Structural framing system: The joists supporting wood floors throughout the house are 2 x 8's, 16" on center. The joists supporting the brick porch (with 3" concrete base) are 2 x 10's, 16" on center. The second floor ceiling joists are 2' x 4", the roof rafters are also 2" x 4", both about 30" on center. The rafters meet at a ridge beam which is 3/4" x 6".
7. Porches: The entry porch is located on the north side of the house. It is a brick porch set on a 3" concrete base and reach by 4 brick risers. The porch is covered by a trellis, composed of two 8" x 10"s with notched ends, resting on 8" x 8" posts.

These beams support 4" x 8", laid perpendicularly. Another 8" x 10" rests on the 4" x 8" in line with the left hand 8" x 8" posts. Four 4" x 8" are attached to the building wall at right angles. A wood strip runs around the entire house just below the second floor windows. This provides a nailer for the trellis joists. A new wood deck is located west of the entry porch. The balusters and railing are rectangular and square in section respectively. A screened sleeping porch is located on the second floor, south elevation. This porch has a concrete floor.

8. Openings:

- a. Doors and doorways: The main door measures about 4' x 6' and has two rows of four lights each, below which are two vertical panels. West of the main door is a pair of wood doors with glass lights, of varying dimensions. This door is not shown on the original drawings. It gives access to a wood deck. The back door, on the west side of the house, is a bifold door, the top panel in each section being glazed, with a single panel beneath. All door trim is plain.
- b. Windows: The east elevation has two composite windows on the first floor. Both have a fixed window flanked by casements with a horizontal band of lights above. The second floor has two single casements with a horizontal band above, and a typical Gill window of paired casements with a horizontal band above. The back wing has a single casement. The north elevation, from east to west, has a typical Gill window on each floor, three casements separated by wood mullions, with 12 lights each over the main entry, and a single casement on the second floor. The west elevation has a sliding window on the first floor and two single casements with a horizontal band of lights above. The enclosed porch has three casement windows separated by wood mullions, each with six lights and a paired casement above. The first floor, south elevation has three casements, separated by wood mullions, with a horizontal band of lights above and a sliding window. The second floor has three typical Gill windows; paired casements with a horizontal band of lights above.

9. Roof:

- a. Shape: The house is covered basically with a hip roof. Asphalt shingles have been nailed over the wooden shingles and red terra cotta tiles run down the ridges.
- b. Cornice, eaves: The house has 3'-6" overhangs with 4' x 8" false rafter ends exposed under the eaves.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor Plans:

- a. First floor: The house is entered on the north side into a center hall. The living room is to the east, an enclosed porch/study to the south, the stairway and dining room to the west. Beyond the dining room is the kitchen and to the west of the stairway is a den and laundry. The living room has a brown tile fireplace with wooden frame and mantel centered in the south wall. The fireplace is flanked with wooden doors with glass lights. The east wall has a bay window; the north wall, paired casements with a horizontal band of lights. The enclosed porch is entered through French doors and has a typical Gill window in its south wall. A composite window of a fixed panel flanked by casements and horizontal band of lights is located in the east wall. The west wall has three casements with built in bookshelves beneath. The dining room has folding French doors. The south wall has three casements with a horizontal band of lights above. A bifold door in the west wall connects to the kitchen, which is not in original plans. The den, which was the pantry and kitchen according to the original plans, is accessible both from the kitchen and from the stair landing. The north wall has double glass doors which open onto a deck. West of the den is the laundry, with servant's stairs, basement stairs, a back door, and a water closet.
- b. Second floor: The second floor has an H-shaped hallway. The northeast bedroom has a typical Gill window in the north wall and single casements in the east. A raised closet is located in the south wall near the west corner. The southeast bedroom has typical Gill windows in both the east and south walls. Both the south and west walls have closets near the southwest corner. Across the hall from the southeast bedroom are two large doors opening to raised closets. South of these closets is a bath, which extends into what was the screened sleeping porch. The bath has a raised floor, paired casements in the west wall, and a double door to the south central bedroom. The south central bedroom has a typical Gill window in its south wall, and a raised closet near the northeast corner. There is a door to the hall in its north wall, and a connecting door to the southwest bedroom in its west wall. Another bath with a raised floor is located across from the south central bedroom on the north side of the hall. The bath has a single casement in its north wall. There are built-in closets and cabinets on either side of the hall heading west and at the west end. Here the hall is lit by

a skylight. The southwest bedroom has a typical Gill window in its south wall, single casements with horizontal band above in the west wall, and a raised closet with a casement window with a horizontal band of lights in the north wall near the west corner. The northwest bedroom has a single casement in the east wall, a casement with horizontal band of lights above in the west wall. The south wall has both a raised closet and a door to the servant's stairs.

- c. There is a basement only under the kitchen. The rest is partially excavated.
2. Stairway: Three risers ascend westward to a landing. Three risers descend into the den from the landing. Six risers ascend from the landing toward the north, at the landing the risers turn again ascend three more steps to a landing, then turn south for the final two risers.
3. Flooring: The entry hall, living room, enclosed porch, and dining room all have carpeting. The kitchen and den have 2" wood flooring. The laundry has a linoleum floor. All the second floor bedrooms and hallway have 3" wood flooring with a 16" perimeter. Both baths have raised tile floors and the screened porch floor is cement.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The entry hall, living room, and dining room have papered walls over plaster and a picture molding. The dining room has a molded cornice. The study/enclosed porch is wood paneled, the kitchen, den, and laundry all have painted plaster walls. The rooms on the second floor all display typical Gill wall details; flush wood trim at the wall and ceiling junctures and flush baseboards with plaster walls and ceilings. All upstairs rooms have picture moldings, except the southwest and northwest bedrooms. The baths have tiled walls to a height of 3-1/2' to 4', with plaster above that.
5. Doors and doorways: Unlike most Gill houses, the doors in this house vary greatly. The doors from the hall to the dining room are folding French doors. French doors provide access to the enclosed porch/study. The connecting door between the dining room and kitchen is a bifold solid wood door. The door to the laundry and back stairways are single panel doors. All doors on the second floor are single panel doors, except for those providing access to the screened porch which is gain French doors. All trim is plain.

D. Site:

1. General Setting:

The cottage for Miss Teats sits on the west side of Seventh Avenue about midway in the block. The main entry is on the north side. A garage is located in the southwest corner of the property, opening onto the alley which runs parallel to Seventh Avenue.

Prepared by: Kim Spurgeon
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